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10-24-1829

### William Berkeley Lewis letter to Moses Dawson

William Berkeley Lewis

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Washington Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> 1829

Sir,

I wrote you yesterday in answer to a letter from you of the 16<sup>th</sup> Inst. Since then I have seen and read your letter to the President; and, also the enclosed editorial remarks of Charles Hammond upon the Shelby and Jackson Cheekassaw letter. Finding several misrepresentations in that editorial article, I feel it to be a duty incumbent on me to enable you to correct them.

1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Hammond, speaking of the Colhgetown, says, "This reserve was ascertained to be much larger and more valuable than the government supposed." The government could not have been mistaken either as to the quantity or quality of the land embraced by the reserve, because it had been previously surveyed by one of its own surveyors, whose duty it was to make a return of the survey to the government, stating its quantity and probable value &c. —

2<sup>d</sup> He says "President Jackson again wrote to James Jackson, advising him of the difficulty thrown in the way by Shelby, and informed him that if Shelby could not be induced to agree, he would sign the Treaty on his own responsibility. Shelby firmly resisted making the Treaty &c. — "The Treaty was so concluded, the sum conveyed to James Jackson, and the \$20,000 was advanced by him". In this quotation there are two misrepresentations. Mr. Hammond would induce us to believe, as he has stated in another part of his article, that the Commissioners differed, and quarrelled on account of the purchase of this reserve. This is not true; there was no difficulty between them with regard



to it. The unpleasant altercation which took place between them was about the last annuity of \$20,000 without any sort of reference to the reserve. His assertion that, "the \$20,000 was advanced by him" (Las Jackson) is equally destitute of truth. James Jackson never advanced one dollar. The Collets laid out on the purchase of goods, their \$20,000 with Thomas Perkins of Philadelphia, who was paid by the Government, so that Mr. Hammond is entirely mistaken in saying that James Jackson advanced the money.

3<sup>d</sup> "The distance", says Mr. Hammond, "between the Treaty ground and Nashville, upward of 250 miles & the time in which the Treaty was made, 20 days, put it out of the question that any citizen, not present could have been consulted after the reserves suggested themselves, and have declared his willingness to advance on the reserve". Here Mr. Hammond undertakes to declare that to be impracticable which every individual on the Treaty ground knows was performed. The commissioners on reaching the Treaty ground learned that there was between thirty and forty thousand dollars due the Indians on account of annuities, and that they were unwilling to commence even upon the subject of selling more of their lands, until all arrears were paid up by the Government. In order to remove this objection, a messenger was dispatched to Nashville for the money, and it is well known that he returned with it, in covered waggon, several days before the Treaty was concluded. The person sent was Major Benjamin Smith, the present Agent to the Chickasaw Indians, who on his return was accompanied, I think, by James Jackson Esq. nephew of Mr. James Jackson. I know he came to the Treaty ground about

that time, and I have no doubt was the deputed agent of James Jackson.

4<sup>th</sup> Mr. Hammond also says, with as much truth as the statements referred to above, "It is now well known that James Jackson was neither at the Treaty ground, nor at Nashville". Here Mr. Hammond must mean, that James Jackson was neither at the Treaty ground nor at Nashville at the time the Treaty was pending - that is between the 1 and 20<sup>th</sup> October 1818. Now, I know this "well known" fact, of Mr. Hammond to be no fact at all. He was in Nashville, or at his residence about three miles north of Nashville, at the time Major Smith was there, as can be testified by Mr. Thomas Crutcher, Treasurer of West Tennessee, and Mr. John Somerville, cashier of U.S. Branch Bank at Nashville. James Jackson was the President of the Bank which furnished the money for the Indians upon the Commissioners drafts, and I have no doubt was written to upon that subject by Genl. Jackson, and very probably in relation to the Treaty also, - and the reserve too.

5<sup>th</sup> From Mr. Hammond it seems, also, that Genl. Jackson "plied him (Shelby) with attention, took him to the Hermitage, solicited a painting of him &c" and "induced him to join in the representations of this letter". The confused style and inexplicit and half-way commitments of the letter are evidence enough that all was not right." Now sir, to show you how badly informed Mr. Hammond is in relation to this whole transaction, it is only necessary to inform you that Genl. Jackson could not have taken Governor Shelby to the Hermitage, in as much as he did not return with him to Nashville. They parted at Florence, 110 <sup>miles</sup> South of Nashville, - the Genl. going by the way of Huntsville,



and none, as I believe, saw each other afterward  
unless it was in the Summer of 1819 when the Genl.  
accompanying President Monroe to Lexington. The  
letter ~~and~~ bears date the 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. ~~and written~~ at Nash-  
ville, <sup>and</sup> is in the hand writing of Genl. Call, and must  
have been written by Governor Shelby himself  
and left for Genl. Jackson's signature when  
he should return home. If then my conjecture  
be right, the confusion, implicit and half-way  
sentiments of this letter must be attributed to  
Governor Shelby and not to Genl. Jackson. I  
am sure Genl. Jackson was not in Nashville  
at the time Gov. Shelby was <sup>after their return from the Treaty-</sup> there - and therefore  
the letter must have been written by Gov.  
Shelby and left for his <sup>(Genl. Jackson)</sup> signature, as the sig-  
nature of the Governor is in his own hand  
writing.

6<sup>th</sup> Mr. Hammond, in another part of his remarks,  
asks "who were those citizens? where were they?  
Why had they an interest in obtaining the cession?  
What was that interest?" In answer to these  
formidable interrogatories, I say those citizens  
were both Southerners and North Carolinians,  
who held grants of land, derived from North  
Carolina, and who would have willingly raised  
fifty thousand dollars, if necessary, to the accom-  
\* plishment of the Treaty. \* - Thus Genl. Jackson well  
knew, but as James Jackson was a member  
of a company of large Capital who wished to  
vest their funds in land, he, for this reason  
doubtless, wrote to him upon the subject, &  
proposed that he should purchase the same,  
in case the Government did not take it at the  
stipulated price.

7<sup>th</sup> Mr. Hammond next asks, "Has this



There been the practice of our Government?  
Is open and avowed corruption and bribery  
one of its principal agents in negotiating Treaties?  
Is this agent employed in treating with Indians  
alone?" - ~~He~~ Mr. Hammond, seems to be honor  
struck at the idea of Governor Shelby and  
Genl. Jackson's using such means in ne-  
gotiating Treaties. Has he ever heard of the  
Treaty with the Creeks negotiated at Wash-  
-ing on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1826 in which  
two hundred and seventy thousand six  
hundred dollars was paid over to the  
Chiefs of the nation immediately on its  
ratification! ~~If he~~ Does he know why  
and for what purpose this enormous sum  
of money was paid to the Chiefs exclusively?  
If he has heard of the Treaty and wishes to  
know why so much money was paid  
to the Chiefs, I have no doubt on appli-  
cation to his friend Clay, he can be grati-  
fied.

As to the threats he throws out about  
the document being published, it is all stuff.  
If the letter is so full of damning proofs against  
Genl. Jackson, as he has, by his comments, endea-  
voured to make the world believe, why is he  
so wroth about its publication? This part  
of his letter, however, I leave to you, not  
doubting but you will give a good  
account of it.

This letter is written in much haste



and not intended for publication. but  
you are at liberty to use the facts contained  
in it.

I am with great respect

Your friend

W. L. G.

~~There~~ There were about one and a half millions  
of acres of this land, in the first part of the state of  
Tennessee, and immensely valuable. The owners  
of these lands had been deprived of them for nearly  
40 years (the grants, many of them at least, having is-  
sued as early as 1784) in consequence of the Indi-  
ans burning the Country.





W. H. H. H.

D. A. And.

FREE

Mrs. Dawson Esq.

Commence

Ohio

Major Lewis

Oct 24/29

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